

Transitional home said to make a difference in its first year

November 11, 2019



Gillian Boldt wasn't religious. She went to the jail's church service as an excuse to get out of her cell, she said. Little did she know she'd meet a woman who would change her life there.

Lynn's Hope House of New Beginnings, founded and run by Daphane Williams, is a faith-based transitional home for women coming out of jail. September marked the home's first year of operation.

With one client successfully through the program, Lynn's Hope House of New Beginnings seemingly has had a fruitful first year.

After sleeping in her car, having her child taken away and desperately awaiting her next dose of drugs, Boldt said she felt exhausted and hopeless. The night she planned to take her life, she was arrested and sent to the Del Norte County Jail.

“I had no reason, nothing, to live for,” Boldt said. “I was done.”

While incarcerated, she met Williams, who visits the county jail weekly as a minister. Boldt applied for entry into Hope House and in December 2018 became Williams’s first client.

For seven months, Boldt stayed with Williams in the quaint house adjacent to Crescent City’s First Baptist Church. She spent five evenings a week participating in the home’s Seeking Safety program, which teaches coping and self-help skills.

Each Saturday was spent in free time - crafts, sewing or a movie night. On Sunday, church was required.

Almost a year after enrolling at the house, Boldt’s life looks much different from the night she considered suicide. She said she’s no longer drug-dependent, has found a faith of her own and has her child back.

“[It] saved my life. I mean, I had nothing, nowhere to go,” Boldt said. “In the short time that I was here, you know, I got my life back.”

She said the home is unlike any other sober-living transitional facility in Crescent City. Williams, who has spent 12 years as a social worker and 13 as a minister for the jail, is committed to seeing her clients succeed, said Boldt.

Williams said that while ministering at the jail, she saw the same women returning time and time again. “[I thought], somebody needs to do something about it. (But) not me. No, really, not me.

“As I talked to different ones in the community, no one seemed interested. So, I was like, ‘Oh, really? Well, I guess it’s me then.’”

After coming to terms with her calling, she applied for nonprofit status in 2015. Through a friend, she discovered that First Baptist Church of Crescent City had a house on their property.

She and the church reached agreement – they would let her use the house if she fixed it up. From October 2015 on, Williams, her husband and two volunteers spent every Saturday cleaning, repairing and repainting the home.

For three years, Williams said, she prayed about when to leave her job as a social worker to begin Hope House. In 2018, she said, she heard the voice of God telling her now was the time.

One year later, the house has saved a life. And, Williams said, she wants to thank the community members who assisted in the home’s success.

“I want to get it out to the community that we really appreciate what they have done for us up to this point,” Williams said. “I just want to make sure they know we don’t just take this for granted, all that they have done.”

Now, said Williams, she’s hoping to hire paid staff to assist her. That would allow more women – a limit of six at a time – to experience the benefits of the close-knit recovery home.

“We’re a 24-hour facility,” Williams said, “so it’s just finding those grants and what other kind of funding so we can have full staff. Then, we can have full clients.”